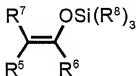


IN THE CLAIMS:

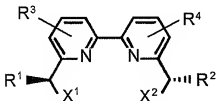
Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A method for producing an optically active hydroxymethylated compound, comprising reacting a silicon enolate and formaldehyde, in the presence of a catalyst, in an aqueous solution or a mixed solvent of water and an organic solvent,

wherein the silicon enolate is represented by the following formula:



wherein R⁵ represents a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group and R⁶ represents an alkyl group, ~~an alkyl-aryl group, or an aryl group, provided that a phenyl group, a benzyl group, a phenyl ethyl group, or a phenyl vinyl group, or wherein~~ R⁵ and R⁶ may together with the carbon atoms to which they are bonded form an indene, 1,2-dihydronaphthylene, cyclohexene, cycloheptene or cyclopentene ring, R⁷ represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl group, ~~and alkyl-aryl group, or an aryl group~~ a phenyl group, a benzyl group, a phenyl ethyl group, or a phenyl vinyl group, and the R⁸ groups, which may be identical or different, are each alkyl groups, and the catalyst is obtained by mixing a ligand or its symmetric isomer and a Lewis acid, wherein the ligand is represented by the following formula:

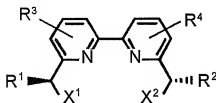


wherein each R¹ and R² group, which may be identical or different, is an alkyl group or ~~an aryl group,~~ provided that at least one of R¹ and R² contains at least three carbon atoms, the R³ and R⁴ groups, which may be identical or different, are each hydrogen atoms, alkyl groups containing one to four carbon atoms or alkoxy groups, the X¹ and X² groups, which may be identical or different, are each -OH or -OMe, and

the Lewis acid is represented by MY_n , wherein M is Cu, Zn, Fe, Sc or a lanthanoid element, Y is a halogen atom, OAc, $OCOCF_3$, ClO_4 , SbF_6 , PF_6 or OSO_2CF_3 and n is 2 or 3.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Withdrawn – currently amended) A catalyst obtained by mixing a ligand or its symmetric isomer and a Lewis acid, wherein the ligand is represented by the following formula (chemical formula 1):



wherein each R^1 and R^2 group, which may be identical or different, ~~are hydrogen atoms, is an alkyl groups or aryl groups,~~ provided at least one of R^1 and R^2 contains at least three carbon atoms, R^3 and R^4 , which may be identical or different, are hydrogen atoms, alkyl groups containing one to four carbon atoms or alkoxy groups, and X^1 and X^2 , which may be identical or different, ~~are represented by $-OR^9$, $-SR^{10}$ or $-NHR^{14}$, wherein R^9 to R^{14} are hydrogen atoms or alkyl groups $-OH$ or $-OMe$, and~~ the Lewis acid is represented by MY_n , wherein M is Cu, Zn, Fe, Sc or a lanthanoid element, Y is a halogen atom, OAc, $OCOCF_3$, ClO_4 , SbF_6 , PF_6 or OSO_2CF_3 and n is 2 or 3.